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PREAMBLE

Slavery
AND

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

(NEW-YORK YOUNG MEN'S

ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

Formed May 2, 1834.

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1834.

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PREAMBLE.

Having associated ourselves together for the purpose of accomplishing an object touching vitally the present interests and future prospects of our beloved country, we acknowledge the right of our fellow citizens to demand, as it is our duty and privilege to set forth our object, the reasons for desiring its accomplishment, and our principles of action, or the means proposed for its attainment.

I. Our object is the political and moral emancipation of the whole colored population in the United States, or, in other words, the *extinction of slavery* both of body and soul.

II. We desire its accomplishment for the following reasons.

It is wrong both in principle and practice. In *principle* it is opposed not only to the declaration of rights upon which our government rests, and in support of which our fa-

thers pledged "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor," but to all the cardinal principles of our confederacy, it is opposed to the laws of natural justice, is at war with the principles of common humanity, and sets at open defiance all the rules of Christian benevolence.

In practice its fruits are evil and only evil.

1st. *It injures the master*—blunts his sensibilities, hardens his heart, stupifies his conscience, contaminates his moral principles, jeopardds his life, and exposes him to the righteous judgment of Heaven.

2d. *It ruins the slave*,—robs him of both body and soul;—for "life," it gives him a living death—for "liberty," chains—for the "pursuit of happiness," no alternative but the patient sufferance of the vilest injuries—for mental power, imbecility—for knowledge, ignorance—for sensibility, stupidity—for virtuous principles, the vilest passions—for moral culture, vicious examples and vicious practices—for light divine, gross darkness—and for an inheritance with the saints in light, a portion with the hypocrite and the unbe-

liever. It converts the moral being created in the image of his Maker, and filled with noble aspirations for immortality, into the semblance of a brute—it robs the Saviour of intelligent beings for whom his blood was shed, and converts the temples of the Holy Ghost into temples of idols.

3d. *It is a moral miasma to all surrounded with its atmosphere.*—"It in effect, annihilates the marriage relation, and exposes thousands of females to pollution and incest, and makes stripes or death the penalty of resistance."—It holds out to all, temptations to crimes of the blackest die—to the masters, their families, and the slaves of both sexes. It reaches all—its corrupting and debasing influences are felt by all. It ruins for time and eternity almost all.

4th. *It is destructive to the state which upholds it.* By making labor disreputable, it drives from its borders many of its most valuable citizens,—paralyzes the arm of industry, and enterprise,—discourages manufactures and the arts, and thus drying up the

sources of wealth, entails poverty as well as crime upon its inhabitants.

5th. *It seriously affects this whole nation, not only, but the nations of the earth.* Whatever taints the life-blood of one of the members of this confederacy, is felt by them all. Slavery, therefore, cripples the energies of the United States. It neutralizes the power of our example upon the other nations of the earth, and checks the progress of republican principles. It foment contentions and divisions in our public councils,—is the cause of sectional prejudice, and threatens the dissolution of the union.

To say nothing more, we feel that this disease has taken too deep root, and its ravages upon the physical, political, and moral constitution of the people are too appalling and too rapidly destructive to await the tardy remedy (if remedy it may be called) of colonization.

For these, among other reasons, we desire its *immediate abolition*.

III. Principles of action. These are such, and such only, as are sanctioned by the dic-

tates of humanity, justice, and religion, and by the laws and constitution of our country. We desire to be bound by that chain only, which was wrought in heaven, to bind the intelligent universe together, to wit: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." To be more specific:—

1st. Truth and truth only shall be the weapon of our warfare, and by it, in reliance upon the arm of Providence, we shall endeavor to slay the unrighteous and cruel prejudice now existing against color in every portion of our country.

2d. By instructing our colored brethren in the knowledge of things human and divine, we shall endeavor to raise them to that station in the scale of being for which they were destined by their Creator.

3d. We shall call up the attention of our fellow-men to the injustice and cruelty of slavery, and the slave-trade, and endeavor to awaken their sympathy in behalf of the hundreds of thousands groaning under the weight of its chains.

4th. We shall address directly the understanding and conscience of the slave holder, and present such facts, arguments, and appeals, as we hope in the hands of God, may lead him to repentance, "to love his neighbor as himself," and to "do to others as he would that they should do unto him."

5th. We shall call upon the young men of our land to do what they can to "break every yoke, undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free," to wipe away the stain which has so long rested upon our national character; to act up to the principles contained in the charter of our liberties, and no longer proclaim that we are free while the nations of the earth are annoyed with the clanking of our chains.

6th. Finally, we shall use every means consistent with the precepts of our Divine Master, to effect "the immediate emancipation of the whole colored race, the emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both, to an intellectual, moral, and political equality with the whites."

With these views and feelings, we have been called together, and we *cannot*, and with the smile of Heaven, we *will not*, rest until we see our land, in truth as well as in name, "the land of the free."

With the belief that by so doing we may more successfully prosecute our object, we agree to form ourselves into a society, and adopt the following

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I. This Society shall be styled the New-York Young Men's *Anti-Slavery Society*, and shall be auxiliary to the "American Anti-Slavery Society."

ART. II. Any young man may become a member of this society by subscribing to these articles, and shall be entitled to vote at its meetings; contribution to its funds being left to the option of each subscriber.

ART. III. The officers of this Society shall consist of a President, two Vice Presidents, a Corresponding and Recording Secretary, a Treasurer, and twenty Managers, who together shall constitute a Board of Directors; to be elected annually by the Society, and shall have the power to form their own By-Laws, and to fill all vacancies in their body.

ART. IV. It shall be the duty of the President, (or in his absence, one of the Vice Presidents,) to preside at all meetings of the society, and of the board of Directors.

ART. V. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to conduct the correspondence, prepare the Annual Report, and perform such other services as may be required of him by the Board.

ART. VI. It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to keep the minutes of the Society, to file all its papers, to give notice of its meetings, and to register the names of its members.

ART. VII. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive and disburse the funds of the Society by authority of the Board of Directors.

ART. VIII. The foregoing officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Society, to whom shall be entrusted the disposition of the Society's funds, and the general management of its affairs. Nine shall constitute a quorum.

ART. IX. The objects of this Society shall be to promote the entire abolition of slavery in the United States, by collecting and diffusing information concerning its true character; by endeavoring to convince our countrymen, by arguments addressed to their understanding and consciences, that slave holding is a heinous crime in the sight

of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned, require its immediate and unconditional abandonment.

ART. X. This Society shall aim to elevate the character and condition of the people of color by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and by correcting the prejudice of public opinion; but never to countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force.

ART. XI. It shall be the especial duty of the Board of Directors to employ their best endeavors to obtain the signatures of as many young men of the city of New-York as may be disposed to join the association, and also to report this Society to the Secretary of the American Society.

ART. XII. This Society shall meet as occasion may require, at the call of the Board of Directors, and annually, at such time and place as the Board shall appoint, when their report shall be read, the accounts of the Treasurer be presented, appropriate addressess delivered, and the officers chosen.

ART. XIII. This Constitution may be altered or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at an annual meeting.